Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Community Development Toolkit
Date:	15 January 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager ext 3225

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	During 2012, Community Services have been working on the development of a training and development toolkit for the community sector.
1.2	The toolkit is an educational and training resource which aims to provide a framework for enhancing and developing the skills of the community sector across the city. The toolkit consists of training sessions concentrated around a number of core areas including; − Basic Book Keeping − Basic Project Planning − Governing Documents − Basic Health & Safety − Supporting the community to plan in the future − Committee skills
1.3	The production of the toolkit is timely given the changing circumstances that communities and community groups currently find themselves in. The range of challenges which our recent economic difficulties present in many of the poorest communities in the city cannot be overstated. The toolkit will provide a resource by which committees can build their knowledge and skills, thereby strengthening their organisational structures and improving the opportunity for the sustainable development of local community support programmes, engagement and representation.

1.4	The publication will also assist the Council in implementing our recently published Community Development Strategy. As the Strategy states "It is long accepted that community development plays an important role in promoting active involvement of local communities in addressing local problems of disadvantage, poverty and inequality. Without it the work of any organisation seeking to deliver change in local areas becomes much more difficult."
1.5	The Toolkit complements the Community Services internal toolkit on Community Development Practice which is being delivered to a number of departments in Council including officers in Parks & Leisure.
1.6	The service has also developed an Emergency Planning manual which has been compiled to provide a one stop resource for emergency planners in the event of an incident, severe weather, civil disturbance or other emergency situation.
1.7	It has been long recognised that our community centres play a pivotal role in delivering services to the citizens of Belfast. This is particularly true in times of stress. By gathering together all of the important information regarding their location, occupancy, heating, car parking etc in one place, this manual will help to ensure that the most appropriate facilities can be chosen and that they are accessible in a way that enables a swift response to local needs.

2	**Key Issues**
2.1	The publication of the toolkit is currently being finalised.
2.2	It is proposed to formally launch the toolkit in spring 2013. Following the launch training sessions will be held with the Council's Community Development Officer Team to provide them with the skills to deliver the training resource to the community sector. We hope to pilot this with the cohort of organisations who receive our capacity grant funding.
2.3	Expressions of Interest will be sought from capacity funded groups and it is envisaged that the training programme will be delivered from March onwards.
2.4	Following this pilot programme, we plan to add further community development modules to the toolkit, for example, consideration is currently being given to developing a module on effective volunteer management.
2.5	Additionally, the toolkit will be used as a resource as part of the

	transitional support to groups as part of the implementation of the Belfast Community Investment Programme (BCIP).

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The Community Resources Unit will oversee the delivery of the toolkit training programme. Community Resources and Area Based Community Development Officers will deliver the programme to interested groups.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	The availability of the training will be offered to all capacity funded groups across the city.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Committee are asked to note progress to date and the proposed delivery plan for the toolkit to community development officers and interested groups as outlined above

6	Decision Tracking
Catherine Taggart will implement as per the time-line outline above.	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Extract from Community Development Toolkit Appendix 2 – Extract from Emergency Planning Manual	